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Ottawa metro

Your essential daily news | TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2017

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DIGITAL DETOX:
New threat has people switching off

metroLIFE

THE WAITING WAS THE HARDEST PART

Tom Petty to headline star-studded Bluesfest in July — his first Ottawa performance since 1981 metroNEWS

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gridlock in Ottawa — it could be worse

TRAFFIC RANKING

But not by much: We're the fourth most congested in Canada

Adam Kveton
For Metro | Ottawa

If you think you spend a disproportionate amount of time fuming about bumper-to-bumper traffic in Ottawa, it's not just your imagination.

A new worldwide study claims the average Ottawa driver spends 31.5 hours in congested traffic in a year.

That makes Ottawa the fourth-worst Canadian city for traffic congestion in the country.

According to the study by Inrix, a vehicle-connectivity and analytics company, Ottawa has it worse than Vancouver, Quebec City, Victoria, Edmonton and Calgary — despite having a smaller population than Calgary and Vancouver — but better than Montreal, Toronto and St. John's, according to the study.

The rankings were based on the hours the average driver spends in congested traffic.

On average, drivers in Ottawa spend 11 per cent of their total driving time in congestion.

In North America, Ottawa ranks 36th, and 150th in the world.

Los Angeles is the most congested city worldwide, followed by Moscow and New York, the report says.

Inrix released its Global Traffic Scorecard Monday, claiming it's the largest study ever of its kind. The scorecard ranks 1,064 cities in 38 countries.

U.S. cities accounted for 11 of the top 25 most congested.

In reply to a tweet asking for thoughts on Ottawa's ranking, Mayor Jim Watson replied: "it's one more reason why we are moving ahead with phase 2 of LRT — transit is congestions greatest foe!"

metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Quebec's maple syrup producers demand more freedoms to compete. **Canada**

ADDICTION

Parent speaks out on opioids

An Ottawa father is calling on parents of teens struggling with drug addiction to speak up after he found his daughter's friend unconscious in his garage on New Year's Eve.

For Sean O'Leary, the issue is personal; he wakes up every day to check if his 16-year-old is still alive.

O'Leary's experience prompted him to write an open letter that has generated a widespread response from parents facing similar challenges.

Paige O'Leary has struggled with drugs since she was 15, including most recently with the opioid Percocet. She says she went to rehab this fall only to start using Percocet five days after her December release.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

ACTIVITIES WARM SEND-OFF TO WINTERLUDE Acrobats from Haut-Vol Productions performed for a crowd at Jacques-Cartier Park on the final day of Winterlude. Despite the warm temperatures, crowds still showed up to see the last of the snow sculptures and ride the zip line. HALEY RITCHIE/METRO

Quebec officers accused of targeting Ontarians

TOURISM

Spa's claims of unfair ticketing denied by police spokesperson

Dylan C. Robertson
For Metro | Ottawa

Chelsea's tourism sector is accusing police of targeting Ontario drivers with hefty fines, to fill their ticket-per-shift quota.

Unlike Quebec, Ontario licence plates have stickers noting their renewal date, making it glaringly obvious when a car's permit has lapsed. In Ontario, that nets a $140 fine that can often be negotiated downward.

But Quebec's fine is $481, and there's no fee-negotiation process under Quebec law.

This seems to have led to a lot of one-time Spa Nordik customers being fined.

"They're not happy to have a ticket on their windshield when they're coming out of the spa after a relaxing day," says Spa Nordik spokeswoman Marianne Trotier. The spa's Facebook page regularly has customers complaining about hefty fines.

Trotier says the issue has persisted for roughly five years, during which the spa has written letters to MRC-des-Collines police and local politicians. A nearby ski hill warns its customers about expired stickers.

Police spokesperson Sgt. Martin Fournel told CBC News his officers had ticketed 1,029 Quebec cars for expired licences in 2016 and a hugely disproportionate 647 cars from outside the province.

Fournel said officers are expected to issue one ticket for every eight-hour shift, but rejected the idea they're targeting Ontarians. "What it's showing us is lots of Ontarians don't pay for their plates," he said.

> **What it's showing us is lots of Ontarians don't pay for their plates.**
> Martin Fournel

Bruce Langer, manager of Doozy Candle, knows thefts occasionally take place in parking lots but doesn't think that justifies almost daily patrols.

"It seems like a cash grab," said Langer. He often sees MRC police cruisers across the street entering Spa Nordik's parking lot "like shooting fish in a bowl."

As head of the local business association, entrepreneurs tell Langer about angry customers refusing to return. "I can't see much of how they're preventing crime by patrolling the parking lots for these expired stickers."

Fournel said the force now sends tickets by mail, to lessen the impact on businesses. But it's not helping Spa Nordik.

"Visitors that come are worth a lot for us, and we don't want to scare them off. It's good for the whole region," Trotier said.

CRIME

Suspended constable charged with drunk driving

An Ottawa police officer was charged with drunk driving Sunday while already under suspension.

Const. Christian Nungisa, 33, was arrested during a traffic stop around 5:30 a.m. and charged with both impaired driving and operating a vehicle with blood-alcohol reading above .08 per cent, according to police.

Nine months earlier, Ottawa police had suspended Nungisa and another officer.

They claim Nungisa had reported his car and gun lost while in Kingston during a May 2016 training exercise. Nungisa found both but didn't tell Kingston police, leading them to pull him over while he was driving it.

Upon returning to Ottawa, police claim, Nungisa gave his gun to a friend rather than returning it to his police locker, netting him a charge for unsafe storage of a firearm.

Police also claimed another constable, Ahmad Hafizi, then 39, was complicit, charging him with unsafe storage as well as transferring a firearm without authority and obstructing a peace officer.

Both officers remain under investigation for these charges.

Earlier this month, Sûreté du Québec charged a 26-year-old Gatineau police officer with impaired driving. They pulled him over Feb. 5 on Highway 50 eastbound, near the exit for La Gappe Boulevard, and suspended his licence for 90 days.

DYLAN C. ROBERTSON/METRO

Ottawa DIGEST

POLITICS

Ottawa-Vanier byelection called by feds

Voters will be able to make their choice for a new Ottawa-Vanier MP on April 3, says the Prime Minister's Office.

The spring byelection will elect an MP to replace Mauril Bélanger, who died in August after being diagnosed with ALS. Bélanger held the riding for 21 years, and it has been a Liberal stronghold since 1935. The candidates include:

- High-school teacher Nirmala Dookeran (Green Party)
- Political staffer Adrian Papara (Conservatives)
- Lawyer Emilie Taman (NDP)
- Businesswoman Mona Fortier (Liberals)

HALEY RITCHIE/METRO

HYDRO OTTAWA

Outages caused by squirrel and metallic balloons

About 640 Hydro Ottawa customers lost power last weekend thanks to metallic balloons and a squirrel.

Hydro Ottawa reported on Twitter that 380 customers were without power Saturday evening in the Bank Street and Alta Vista area. A reply to that post said a power line had exploded, caused by metallic balloons.

On Sunday, approximately 262 customers lost power just east of the Britannia Conservation Area. This time, Hydro Ottawa said a squirrel had caused a pole to catch fire, damaging an overhead conductor.

ADAM KVETON/METRO

ROAD SAFETY

Two pedestrians injured by vehicles

Ottawa police are considering charges after two men were struck Sunday while walking in the ByWard Market during an unseasonably warm weekend.

Paramedics say they were called to York and Dalhousie streets at 11:49 a.m. after a pedestrian was struck by a vehicle and "immobilized." The 36-year-old man was taken to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

Hours later, they were called to Cumberland Street between York and George just before 6 p.m., to find a 49-year-old man pinned under a vehicle. They sent him to a trauma centre in serious but stable condition.

DYLAN C. ROBERTSON/METRO

RIDEAU HIGH

Safe space to stay

Dylan C. Robertson
For Metro | Ottawa

As Ottawa folds together its low-capacity schools, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board is pledging to maintain a safe space for Indigenous students.

Rideau High School opened its Aboriginal Learning Space in January 2014, giving Indigenous students a special room to smudge, a spiritual cleansing ceremony that involves burning traditional plants.

But trustees voted last Thursday to close the school, after emotional debate that raised outcry from parents, accusations of racism and a tearful speech from Trustee Sandra Schwartz.

"They are not easy decisions, and this is my community. I've lived in Ottawa East for more than 30 years," Schwartz told Metro. "You don't get elected to close schools."

Rideau didn't have enough students to support its curriculum, and recently taught electives like geography only every second year. Trustees studied moving other schools into Rideau, but the province wouldn't pledge money to build an extra wing of classrooms.

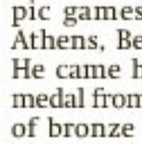
So as soon as September, Rideau's 400 students will be sent to Gloucester High School. Both schools have students born in scores of countries, yet each only held roughly 40 per cent capacity, and Gloucester has more physical space.

But within the plans is a clause that will see the Indigenous space recreated at Gloucester, allowing students to burn sage or sweetgrass to cleanse themselves with smoke.

Paralympian swimming in research award cash

HEALTH

Hill to study impact of sport on people with disabilities



Adam Kveton
For Metro | Ottawa

Carleton University journalism student Brian Hill is the winner of the 2016 Centennial Flame Research Award which comes from the change that Parliament Hill visitors throw in to flame fountain. ADAM KVETON / FOR METRO

Brian Hill was born legally blind.

"My vision is 20 over 200," he said.

"If you can see something or read something at 100 feet, I typically need to be about 10 feet away from it to see it at a comparable level."

That condition meant a lot of restrictions for Hill, including his participation in sports.

He tried playing basketball, baseball and soccer, but he could never get good at them, and some could even be dangerous, he said.

But swimming was a different story.

He found that out early on at his family home on Vancouver Island, where his father and uncles had built an in-ground pool.

Soon, Hill found he was more than capable: swimming was something he was good at. Even great.

Starting in 2000, Hill represented Canada at the Paralympic games in Sydney, then Athens, Beijing and London. He came home with a silver medal from Sydney, and a pair of bronze medals from Athens, not to mention several gold medals from the 2007 Rio Parapan Am games.

"For the first time in my life, I felt like I was equal or better than my peers," Hill said.

Now a journalism student at Carleton University, Hill has won something else.

At the end of last year, Hill received the 2016 Centennial Flame Research Award. It's a grant, funded by the money thrown into the flame's fountain by Parliament Hill visitors, given to a person with a disability to conduct research into the contributions of people with disabilities to Canadian life.

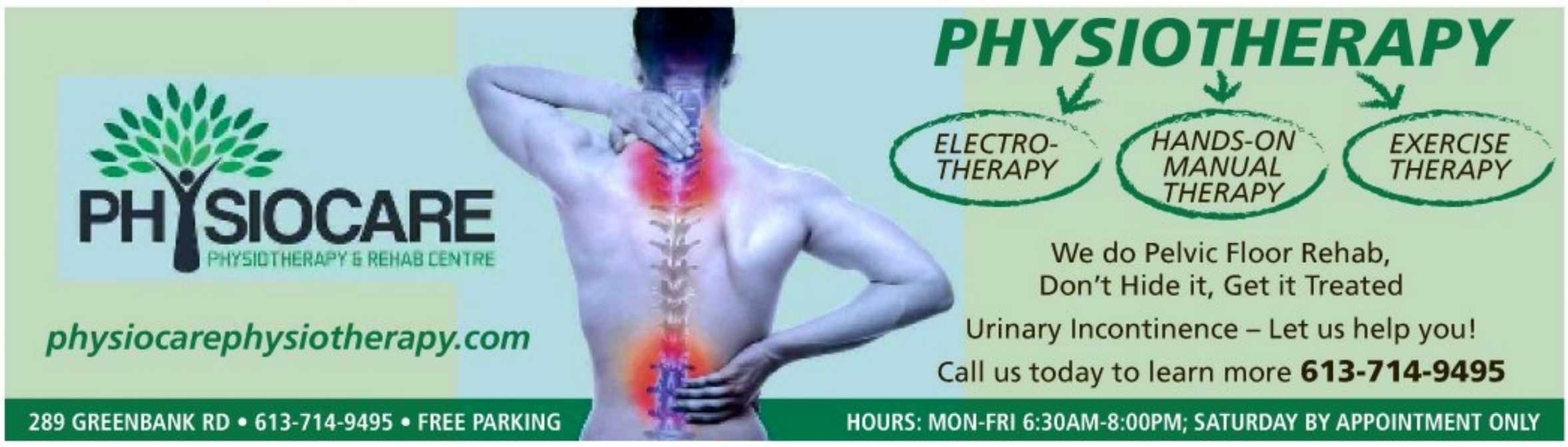
> **When you grow up with a disability there is constant reinforcement that you're not as good as people around you.** Brian Hill

Hill's research will look to understand the impact that participation in sport can have on people with disabilities, and why participation is so low.

"Canadian adults participate in sport regularly, but we know that the participation levels for people with disabilities are significantly lower all the way through life," Hill said.

Figuring out why that is and how to change that is understandably important to Hill.

"When you grow up with a disability … there is constant reinforcement of the fact that you're not equal, and you're not as good as people around you. So when you finally discover something and that's not true, then your life changes. And that's what swimming was for me."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SPECIAL EVENT

Celebrate Heritage Day at city hall

Alex Parsons
For Metro | Ottawa

Festivities for the Canada 150 edition of Heritage Day are set for city hall today.

Mayor Jim Watson will be in attendance and will be joined by 45 local exhibitors for events from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Council of Heritage Organizations in Ottawa (CHOO), which will be co-hosting the event, turns 25 this year, and will be receiving a Heritage Day proclamation. CHOO director Catherine Lindquist said there are many special events planned.

"There's two performances by the Eagle River Singers from Kitigan Zibi First Nation," Lindquist said. "That's actually a drumming group, so you'll have some high-impact drumming before and after the ceremony."

She said there will also be activities, including an intriguing initiative from the Ottawa Guild of Potters.

"'Populace' is a really neat cross-sector pollination of art and heritage," Lindquist said.

"They're making 9,000 ceramic feathers and flowers which symbolize our region that will be installed on the Canadian Museum of Nature site in the summer."

She said people can help make some at their booth.

A surprise, interactive finale was also teased.

"My Canada!" encourages citizens to visit museums and other places of historical importance to get involved with heritage and share their experiences.

Blake Murray not only preserved this memorial to Stefan Trynda, but carved an additional cross on top. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rescue for tree memorial

KINDNESS

Diseased ash saved after stranger saw its value to family

An Ottawa family says it is overwhelmed with gratitude after a stranger saved a roadside memorial to a loved one that was on a tree slated for removal.

That tree, known to the family as "Stef's tree," bore a memorial on its trunk to Stefan Trynda, a 19-year-old man who died after crashing into it in 2001.

After standing along a road in Ottawa's south end for years, the ash tree recently fell victim to the destructive emerald ash borer beetle and died.

A few weeks ago the City of Ottawa dispatched Blake Murray and his crew to cut down seven ash trees in the south end, with "Stef's tree" among them.

When Murray arrived, he saw one of the trees had a white cross nailed to it. He knew it was important, he said, but not to whom.

"We figured we'd better save it," Murray said.

So Murray and his team cut down only the top portion of the tree, above the white cross. One of his co-workers then suggested adding to the memorial, so Murray used his chainsaw to carve a second cross onto the top of the tree trunk.

"It felt nice to do something nice," Murray said.

News of his good deed spread on Facebook, eventually reaching Trynda's sister.

"It is beautiful," an emotional Anne-Marie Trynda-Greaney said of Murray's gesture. "It's such a kind thing to do. You don't often hear about kindness like that, you only really hear about the horrible things these days."

Trynda had been about 10 minutes away from home in February 2001 when he hit black ice, lost control of his car and hit the tree which nearly got cut down entirely, his sister said.

"That tree has become a memorial for my family and friends," she said. "At the time there were flowers and all sorts of things there, but over time that is gone and just a cross remains."

Trynda was destined for great things, his sister said, describing her brother as an exceptional violinist who was studying biochemistry at the University of Ottawa.

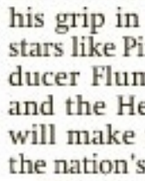
Trynda's parents find it too difficult to speak about their son publicly, and continue to struggle with their loss, Trynda-Greaney said. But they have been overwhelmed by Murray's gesture, she said.

The tree has given them a sense of peace, she said, a physical reminder of their son's spirit.

"Losing their boy pains them every single day, but they drive by that tree almost daily and will sometimes visit it," she said. "Even though we'd never forget Stef, it's nice to know the tree still stands, like it won't forget him." THE CANADIAN PRESS

MUSIC

Bluesfest as big as Canada 150



Trevor Greenway
Metro | Ottawa

With names like Tom Petty, LCD Soundsystem, Muse, Pink and Toby Keith behind him, Mark Monahan believes the Ottawa Bluesfest lineup rivals any music festival in North America.

It's clear that for Canada's 150th birthday, the Bluesfest crew has curated the biggest, most ambitious bill in the event's 23-year history. Country music star Toby Keith opens the festival July 6 before a cavalcade of international talent fills out the nearly two-week sonic window.

"We definitely figured that it was going to be a big year and that we had to step up and try and get a significant lineup just to make some noise," says Monahan, the festival's executive director.

Part of what makes this lineup so satisfying, Monahan said, is he was able to reel in many acts that had slipped through his grip in past years: superstars like Pink, Australian producer Flume and Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, who will make their first visit to the nation's capital in 36 years.

"The last time he played here was 1981," an excited Monahan pointed out.

Other heavy-hitters include 50 Cent, Begonia, Tegan and Sara, and DJ Mustard.

Ottawa Bluesfest runs July 6-16 at LeBreton Flats. Tickets go on sale Thursday at ottawabluesfest.ca.

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NOVEL IDEA

New library app designed to address food literacy

The Ottawa Public Library has dished up "à la carte," a new web app that will share stories about food culture in Ottawa. Each month, a different food-inspired story will be featured on the multi-media platform.

The app is part of the library's food literacy project that aims to promote a healthy vision about food, nutrition and sustainability.

Last year, a provincial grant from the Ontario Libraries Capacity Fund delivered more than $180,000 for new library and community programming, funds that included the development of the app.

This month, the site highlighted efforts from FarmWorks and FoodWorks. SARAH DAVIES/FOR METRO

EDUCATION

Two city high schools score in Top 5: Report

Haley Ritchie
Metro | Ottawa

The annual Fraser Institute ranking of 740 Ontario high schools has two Ottawa institutions in the top five.

With a score of 9.4 out of 10, Colonel By Secondary School placed second this year (and third last year). Downtown Ottawa's Lisgar Collegiate also did well, landing at fourth.

The ranking is based on standardized-testing numbers, and aims to provide information to parents. Also, "we make it easier for educators to seek out best practices and to find out from those more successful schools what it is they are doing," said institute spokesman Peter Cowley.

Most of the Ottawa schools represented on the report card improved this year. Cowley said small fluctuations occur from year to year, but the best indicator of a school's performance is a consistent improvement over the past five years.

The ranking also provides information on the number of ESL and special needs students.

The highest-ranking school in Ontario was St. Michael's Choir School in Toronto.

Other high-placing Ottawa schools include Earl of March in Kanata, which came in 12th, and West Carleton Secondary School, which rose to 17th from 18th.

The annual list faces criticism from school boards and academics who say the emphasis on standardized testing doesn't paint a full picture of a school's strengths and weaknesses.

RBC Bluesfest

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*line-up will always be subject to change.

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Montreal now a sanctuary city

IMMIGRATION

Designation means refugees have full access to local services

Montreal city council passed a motion Monday making it the latest Canadian jurisdiction to declare itself a "sanctuary city" for non-status immigrants.

The designation means undocumented refugees will have full access to local services regardless of their situation, with the city following in the footsteps of Toronto, Hamilton and London, Ont.

Mayor Denis Coderre told reporters he felt compelled to act because of events south of the border.

"One of the reasons I've done that is clearly because of what's happening in the United States and what I'm witnessing in Europe," Coderre said.

In recent weeks, more and more people have flowed illegally across the U.S. border into Canada as President Donald Trump cracks down on illegal immigration and imposes new restrictions on refugees. Canada Border Services Agency says 452 people filed a claim for refugee asylum at Quebec-U.S. land border crossings in January.

A family of asylum claimants cross the border into Canada from the U.S. Monday, near Hemmingford, Que, an hour outside of Montreal. As the number of refugees crossing the border grows, cities are undergoing debates regarding sanctuary designations. Montreal is the latest to declare itself a sanctuary city. PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Given that current context, several Canadian cities have expressed interest in adopting similar motions, including Ottawa, Saskatoon and Regina.

Toronto became Canada's first sanctuary city in 2013.

Coderre, a former federal immigration minister, assured the measures will go beyond symbolism and help those who need it the most.

Available services would include access to municipal programs and buildings, including libraries and recreation centres, while Coderre said he wants to discuss major issues such as health, housing and education with provincial and federal authorities.

"The bottom line is to integrate them," he said. "And if you don't have a criminal case (or pose a security risk), we will normalize your situation. You will be able to remain here."

> **It doesn't go far enough.**
> Jaggi Singh

But some migrant rights' groups called the measure largely symbolic as Montreal joined other North American cities such as San Francisco, Boston, New York and Chicago as designated sanctuary cities.

A number of groups told a news conference a few hours before the motion passed that while the gesture would be in good faith, it wouldn't provide the tangible changes to make Montreal truly a sanctuary city.

"He's coming from a good place, I'm not going to deny that," said Jaggi Singh, a spokesman for Solidarity Across Borders. "But it doesn't go far enough."

Singh said the city should at least ensure that Montreal police and transit officials will not collaborate with Canada Border Services Agency and hand over undocumented migrants.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

SURVEY

Poll warns of anti-refugee sentiments

David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

Sunday's Conservative leadership debate in Vancouver continued to raise alarm over the federal Liberals' refugee policies, as the flood of asylum-seekers swells over the U.S. border into Manitoba, Quebec, and B.C.

But while some have dismissed anti-refugee sentiment as "fringe," a new opinion poll suggests it's more widely shared by Canadians than previously thought, even if it's a minority.

An Angus Reid Institute survey of 1,508 Canadians discovered that one-in-four would support a Donald Trump-style ban on accepting Syrian refugees into the country.

It appears that not all Canadians are welcoming of the newcomers. More than half, for instance, agreed with the statement: "Too many refugees don't make enough of an effort to fit into mainstream Canadian society."

And two-in-five of those polled, or 38 per cent, believed that "many people in their community would not be welcoming to a refugee family," according to the poll. Generally, however, the survey found that 57 per cent of Canadians broadly support the federal government's quota of accepting 40,000 refugees from Syria this year.

But among those who don't agree, Kurl said, there's a "feeling of unease" that is more widespread.

"This is not something that resides only on the fringes of Canadian society," she said.

The Institute conducted its opinion poll online, but said that the results were the equivalent of a 2.5 per cent margin of error, 19 times out of 20.

QUEBEC

Maple syrup producers struggling for 'a little freedom'

Nicole Varin stocks the shelves at her sugar shack in Oka, Quebec. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec, the world's largest producer of maple syrup, is ramping up output as it fends off rising competition from the U.S. and neighbouring provinces as well as a farmer rebellion from within.

The province is adding five million taps over the next two years to its existing 43 million spigots. Simon Trepanier, executive director of the Quebec Maple Syrup Federation, says that is intended to satisfy a growing appetite for the natural sugar, which is increasingly being used as an ingredient in food and drinks.

More than 90 per cent of the record 73 million kilograms of maple syrup made in Canada last year was tapped in Quebec, according to Statistics Canada. Yet the province's near-monopoly over the maple syrup market is loosening.

Despite a 30 per cent increase in production over the last decade, Quebec's share of global output has fallen from a high of about 82 per cent in 2003 to nearly 71 per cent last year, according to data from Statistics Canada and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The problem, some say, lies with the tight grip that the Quebec Maple Syrup Federation has over the province's maple syrup producers. The group sets quotas and prices that Quebec sugar shacks have to abide by, requires they sell to authorized buyers and pay an administrative fee on their output.

Angele Grenier, a maple syrup producer in Sainte-Clotilde-de-Beauce, about 100 kilometres south of Quebec City, disagrees.

Grenier has spent $150,000 in legal fees to fight $400,000 in fines for bypassing the federation to sell her syrup to a buyer in New Brunswick. The Supreme Court of Canada has to decide whether to hear an appeal.

"In Quebec, you're not able to have a little freedom," Grenier says. A lot is riding on the court's decision in Grenier's case, says Nicole Varin, a farmer facing about $500,000 in fines for selling maple butter, candy and other products outside the purview of the federation to sugar shacks and small fruit stands.

"If Mrs. Grenier wins, we will win freedom to sell to whom we want," Varin said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Inmate claiming human rights case

PRISONS

Civil liberties advocates take on his concerns

A Jewish aboriginal prisoner assaulted by inmates alleges the authorities set up the white supremacist attack in retaliation for his complaints about treatment he says has violated his constitutional rights.

Timothy Nome, 42, serving an indeterminate sentence for punching a guard years ago, also claims correctional officers at the prison in British Columbia poured pig lard onto his kosher food and that authorities are denying him access to the courts.

The contested allegations are the latest in a protracted battle between the maximum-security inmate, who has spent a total of more than 12 years in segregation during stints at numerous institutions around the country, and prison authorities, who appear to be at a loss about how to deal with him.

Timothy Nome in 2011.
HANDOUT/ THE CANADIAN PRESS

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association wrote Bobbi Sandhu, the warden of Kent Institution in Agassiz, B.C., to express its concerns about Nome's most recent prolonged stretch in segregation (130 days) and his "abhorrent treatment" by prison staff.

In the December letter, the association calls on Sandhu to investigate Nome's claim that he has been unable to take several grievances to court because authorities wouldn't allow him paper, a printer, or access to the prison law library.

"These are matters of utmost importance," the CCLA letter states.

Nome was on a rare stint out of segregation at Kent Institution hoping to be reclassified as medium security when he was attacked last month. He blames white supremacists sporting visible Nazi tattoos — and says authorities were aware the newcomers to his range would be "incompatibles."

"It's foreseeable that me, being an Orthodox Jew, is going to get into trouble with that," Nome said.

Jean-Paul Lorieau, a regional spokesman for Correctional Service Canada, said Nome had no listed incompatibles on the unit at the time of the assault, which left him with a scald wound.

"Inmates are free to identify any incompatibles they may feel are present at any time" Lorieau said. "Staff were unaware of any safety concerns in regards to Mr. Nome prior to the assault."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

150 WAYS of looking at Canada

POSTCARD NO. 21

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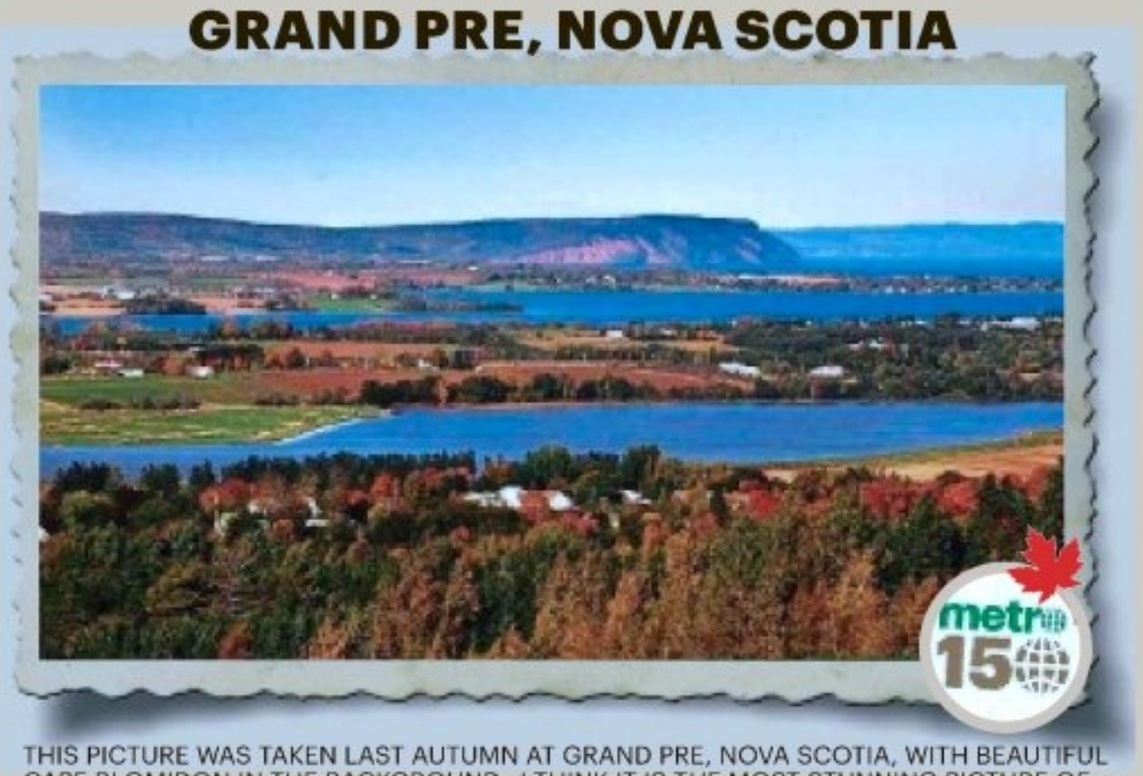

THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN LAST AUTUMN AT GRAND PRE, NOVA SCOTIA, WITH BEAUTIFUL CAPE BLOMIDON IN THE BACKGROUND. I THINK IT IS THE MOST STUNNING PICTURE OF THE ANNAPOLIS VALLEY AND IT TAKES MY BREATH AWAY WHENEVER I SEE IT. **JILL RHYNO**

SEND US YOUR POSTCARD

Each day until July 1, Metro will feature one reader's postcard in our editions across the country, on Metronews.ca and our 150postcards Instagram page. Get involved by sending us a photo of your favourite place in Canada along with 25 to 50 words about why that place is special to you. Email us at **scene@metronews.ca** or post to Instagram or Twitter with the hashtag **#150postcards**.

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POLITICAL DIGEST

Trump taps military strategist to replace Flynn
President Donald Trump has tapped Army Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster, a prominent military strategist known as a creative thinker, as his new national security adviser, replacing the ousted Michael Flynn.

Trump announced the pick Monday at his Palm Beach, Florida, club and said McMaster is "a man of tremendous talent and tremendous experience." AP

Russia's ambassador to United Nations dies
Russia's ambassador to the United Nations, a veteran diplomat known as a potent, savvy yet personable voice for his country's interests who could both spar and get along with his Western counterparts, died suddenly Monday after falling ill in his office at Russia's UN mission.

Vitaly Churkin was taken to a hospital, where he died a day before his 65th birthday, said Russia's deputy U.N. ambassador, Vladimir Safronkov. The cause of his death was unknown. AP

Trump wigs are out of stock in Austria
So many people want to be Donald Trump this Carnival season in Austria that some costume shops have run out of wigs mimicking the U.S. president's memorable hairstyle.

Shop owner Manuela Plank, recognizing a business opportunity, went to work making her own toupees a la Trump.

Plank thought she was ready to meet demand with the 10 Trump wigs she had stocked for Austria's pre-Lenten season of balls and other masked events. But they were quickly snapped up. AP

Thousands take to streets in protest on Presidents Day

ACTIVISM!

Rallies across the U.S. dubbed Not My President's Day

Thousands of demonstrators turned out Monday across the U.S. to challenge Donald Trump in a Presidents Day protest dubbed Not My President's Day.

The events on the federal holiday didn't draw nearly as many people as the million-plus who thronged the streets following the Republican president's inauguration a month earlier, but the message was similar.

Thousands of flag-waving protesters lined up outside Central Park in Manhattan. Many in the crowd chanted "No ban, no wall. The Trump regime has got to fall." They held aloft signs saying "Uphold the Constitution Now" and "Impeach the Liar."

A rally in downtown Los Angeles also drew thousands. Demonstrators there called attention to Trump's crackdown on immigration and his party's response to climate change and the environment. Organizers said they chose to rally on the holiday as a way to honour past presidents by exercising their constitutional right to assemble and peacefully protest.

> "I'm trying to demonstrate as much as possible until I figure out what else to do. Rebecca Wolfram

In Chicago, several hundred rallied across the river from the Trump Tower, shouting "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Donald Trump has got to go."

Rebecca Wolfram of Chicago, who's in her 60s, said concerns about climate change and immigrant rights under Trump prompted her to start attending rallies.

"I'm trying to demonstrate as much as possible until I figure out what else to do," said Wolfram, who held a sign that said "Old white ladies are really displeased."

Several hundred demonstrated in Washington, D.C. Dozens gathered around the fountain in Dupont Circle chanting "Dump Trump" and "Love, not hate: That's what makes America great."

Dozens marched through midtown Atlanta for a rally named with a Georgia flavour: "ImPEACH NOW! (Not My) President's Day March."

Hundreds of protesters chanting "This is what democracy looks like" marched through Salt Lake City.

The Salt Lake Tribune reports that the crowd marched to push back against Trump and his administration's stance on such issues as the environment, immigration, free speech and Russia.

Some people raised signs that said "Not My President," while others held up a large American flag. Protester Reg Brookings warned the crowd that Trump is trying to divide the country by making such groups as immigrants the enemy.

A small but unruly group of protesters faced off with police in downtown Portland, Oregon.

Hundreds of Trump opponents and supporters turned out in Rapid City, South Dakota. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Thousands of people across the United States joined in rallies during the federal holiday Presidents Day. Activists seized on the holiday to organize rallies dubbed 'Not My President's Day" in opposition of Donald Trump's policies. GETTY IMAGES

EXTREME WEATHER

Flood warnings issued amid heavy rain in Northern California

A firefighter carries a woman from her car after it was caught in street flooding as a powerful storm moves across Southern California on Feb. 17 in Sun Valley, California. GETTY IMAGES

Forecasters issued flash flood warnings Monday throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and elsewhere in Northern California as downpours swelled creeks and rivers in the already soggy region.

The National Weather Service said heavy rain could persist into the evening and was expected to cause flooding on the Carmel River in Monterey County and Coyote Creek in Santa Clara County.

In the San Joaquin Valley, residents were patrolling levees for signs of danger, reviewing evacuation plans and filling hundreds of sand bags as the San Joaquin River kept rising.

"Our community is pulling together like real champs," said San Joaquin River Club resident Paula Martin, who is helping co-ordinate emergency plans for the private neighbourhood of 800 homes.

Martin said the neighbourhood has sirens in a clubhouse and church that can warn residents of impending flooding.

The weather service issued snow and wind advisories, including a flash flood warning for the Soberanes burn area in Monterey County. It said winds could reach 60 mph in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Santa Cruz County had seen 2.8 inches of rain in 24 hours and could see up to 8 inches before the storm passes Tuesday. Marin County got 2.3 inches of rain while close to an inch fell in San Francisco.

Forecasters said rainfall in San Francisco has already surpassed the normal annual amount for the wet season that begins in October.

The city has logged 24.50 inches of rain since Oct. 1, said forecaster Bob Benjamin. The average rainfall for the year ending Sept. 30 is 23.65 inches.

A pre-evacuation advisory was issued for a community in Madera County after water discharges from Bass Lake were increased and threatened to swell rivers, officials said.

The sheriff's office said residents should be ready to leave quickly if conditions worsen.

In the mountains, the weather service forecast heavy snow in the Lake Tahoe area with a high avalanche danger until Tuesday in an area of the Sierra Nevada from Yuba Pass to Ebbetts Pass. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moving abroad can be taxing

RETIREMENT

Mutual funds, stocks included in departure tax

Planning to take that dream job overseas? Or making a permanent move to the U.S., despite you-know-who in the White House?

Your RRSP and other investments could be the last things on your mind. But they shouldn't be.

"There are tax implications to becoming a non-resident of Canada," says Abby Kassar, vice president, high net worth planning services, RBC Wealth Management Services.

When you are no longer a Canadian resident, the government requires you to sever ties to the country, meaning you are deemed to dispose of all of your assets at fair market value, with a few exceptions. Any unrealized gains will be subject to income tax — known as departure tax — even if you have not actually sold the property, she says.

DON'T FORGET

- As a non-resident, the most Canadian tax you will pay on your RRSP is 25 per cent. However, you will also likely have a tax obligation in the foreign country.
- Also remember that you can't transfer your Canadian RRSP to a retirement plan offered in another country. Any transfer or withdrawal of funds out of your RRSP would be considered a distribution (or withdrawal) and would be subject to a non-resident withholding tax of 25 per cent.

Experts warn of a big tax hit if you collapse a Registered Retirement Savings Plan before moving to another country. ISTOCK

"Depending on the circumstances, the tax bill can be quite significant," says Todd Sigurdson, director, tax and estate planning with Investors Group. "The most common culprit of a large tax bill is the departure tax due on the deemed disposition of non-registered investments with large capital gains."

Assets subject to departure tax include stocks of all companies (public or private), mutual funds, exchange-traded funds, partnership interests, real estate owned outside Canada, foreign trusts and certain kinds of personal property that have appreciated in value.

Fortunately, Canadian real estate and RRSPs are exempt, so moving doesn't mean you have to sell your house or cash in your retirement savings.

"In fact, there is no obligation to dispose of any RRSPs or RRIFs upon becoming a non-resident," says Kassar. If you were to collapse your RRSP before leaving Canada, you would face a significant tax hit because that withdrawal would be added to your income and be fully taxable in the year you withdrew the money, she explains.

"Generally, this is not recommended because it results in a pre-payment of tax and potentially a higher rate of tax," she says. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

EMPLOYMENT

Uber accused of sexism

Uber's chief executive ordered an urgent investigation Monday into a sexual harassment claim made by a female engineer who alleged her prospects at the company evaporated after she complained about advances from her boss.

Travis Kalanick responded on Twitter to an open statement by Susan Fowler Rigetti about her year at the ride-hailing app. In a blog post titled Reflecting On One Very, Very Strange Year At Uber, Rigetti says the company's human resources department ignored her complaints because her boss was a high performer.

In her blog, Rigetti said that on her first official day with the company, her boss propositioned her in a string of messages on the company chat.

Rigetti left the team. But she said as she tried to progress in the company, she found her way blocked. She alleged sexism was rampant, and when she pointed that out at a company meeting, she was rebuffed. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Tuesday, February 21, 2017

SHREE PARADKAR ON MARKETING TO GIRLS

There's nothing ha-ha funny or cute about clothes that blare out words such as 'Future bride,' 'Allergic to Algebra,' and 'I only date heroes.'

If apparel oft proclaims the man, when it comes to girls, it appears to oft proclaim them sexual objects from a very young age.

It's 2017, and objectification of girls should have been a long-shunned shame of the past. Perhaps there is such polarization on the perception of equality (Girls' lives matter. No, ALL lives matter!) that issues around negative social messaging for girls are blindingly obvious to some and completely obscure to others.

What else might explain why push-up bikinis have been made for little girls or clothes with dumb messages, or, for heaven's sakes, pacifiers that say "Flirt."

There's nothing ha-ha funny or cute about clothes that blare out words such as "Future bride," "Allergic to Algebra," and "I only date heroes."

Pressure on girls has intensified instead of easing up. They have to look pretty, as defined by euro-centric values, they have to be thin, and even sexy. The window in which to build resilience is rapidly shrinking.

The number of girls under age 18 who got breast implants tripled, from 3,872 to 11,326 in one year (from 2002 to 2003), an American Psychological Association report says.

Women's bodies have historically been decorative sexualized objects, but girls are not miniature women. Their still-forming ability to process cultural messaging makes them susceptible to marketing. If women end up with health issues — eating disorders, depression — in struggling to meet some arbitrarily ascribed fantasy for a body that extracts its pound of flesh, the seeds of that lowered self-esteem are sown when they are little girls.

It's easy for me to roll my eyes at the magazines on grocery check-out counters featuring digitally manipulated images of thin, tall white women. How to get hot bikini bods! How to tighten your butt! When I see diverse little girls gazing at them in wonder, though, the only tightness I feel is in my heart as they soak in the glamour and unconsciously create their illusory ideals of beauty.

Re-write Billboards with messages like 'Follow your dreams, even the wild ones' were rolled out across Canada last week as part of a campaign to empower girls. SUPPLIED/CANADIAN WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

Perhaps those who buy and sell these hyper-sexualized messages have themselves bought into narrow ideals of female attractiveness. Perhaps the attendant suffering is all they know, which is why they perpetuate it.

The question is, how to break that cycle?

A cross-Canada ad campaign launched last week is trying to neutralize some of these harmful missives. For about six weeks, 30 cities and towns will feature dozens of highway billboards and subway posters roaring out messages like "Follow your dreams, even the wild ones," "Girls are fierce like tigers" and "You don't need to be perfect, you need to be YOU!" These messages, from Fayla, 9, Julia, 7, and Ava, 7, (in that order), were selected for Toronto from thousands that poured in from across Canada in a #GirlPowered campaign co-created by the Canadian Women's Foundation and ad agency Havas.

"We wanted to use the same media to send out a different message that was oversized and empowering," says Paulette Senior, president and CEO of Canadian Women's Foundation.

"Girls are powerful beyond what they know themselves to be. We wanted them to maintain their sense of self, and not be so encumbered by messages of who they are."

The campaign launched in October, when it marked the International Day of the Girl Child with an event in downtown Toronto. Young girls were asked to share a message for their peers, then their responses were flashed on a billboard in real time. The excited reactions resulted in a heart-warming video that got shared by Upworthy, meaning, instead of the hundreds of views the organizers expected, it got hundreds of thousands.

The video was then shared on girlpowered.ca where girls are being asked to submit their own messages.

Cory Eisentraut, the VP and Creative Director of Havas Canada, the creative force behind the ad, is in talks to remake the concept internationally. This was also one of the times when his work turned into a meaningful conversation at home. When his daughter Claire, 9, sat down to compose a message, her 8-year-old brother sat in. They discussed ideas that soon devolved into "Girls are better than boys."

It gave Eisentraut the chance to chime in. "It isn't about better or best. It's about equal," followed by a discussion on what equal means.

I wonder, though, if campaigns like these spur conversations in households where parents are already reflective. What role do they play in changing minds or at least provoking introspection? Or do people tell their daughters they are tigers but not unpack or model the specifics themselves?

The best hope for systemic change is when women take on corporate leadership roles.

By some estimates, it will take about 40 years for North American boardrooms to achieve gender parity. Looks like we're relying on the "girls are tigers" messengers to also do the heavy lifting in the future.

Let us, as adults at least, enable them by dialing down our dumbness.

Shree Paradkar is a Toronto Star columnist and digital editor. She tackles issues of race and gender.

LRT 'transformation' truly ahead of its time

COLLINS' CAPITAL

Steve Collins

"Transformative" is the descriptor city officials favour for our ongoing LRT project.

The t-word was invoked again for a fleshed-out plan for the Confederation Line's second phase, which goes to the finance committee this week. If approved, it will "transform Ottawa's LRT network into a world-class transit system," Mayor Watson said.

Committee members will have to use their imaginations. They're voting to expand (sorry, transform) a network that is not yet built, let alone running.

"The procurement of the Stage 2 project marks the first time in Canada that a sponsoring agency has extended an existing (contract) that has not yet been completed and commenced revenue service," the staff report says, while reminding us how well it's gone so far:

The report goes on to tout the accolades the project's public-private partnership model has received from the likes of Project Finance Magazine and The Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships.

The plaudits are nice, but the proof of a procurement must be what's ultimately procured, and that's best judged some time after Passenger One has taken Trip One on the rails. If it's too early for an audit of Phase 1, as council voted it was earlier this year since work is still in progress, then perhaps it's also a bit hasty to declare the whole thing a roaring success.

Ifs, buts and contingencies abound in the report. We can afford this $3.6 billion expansion of light rail, highway widening and other "bundled" projects, we're told, as long as the feds and province foot two-thirds of the bill, transit taxes and fares rise in step with costs, and interest rates stay below six per cent.

Still, the Phase 2 plan is exciting and detailed. The completion dates are ambitious, sounding less like sci-fi and more like a plausible credit card expiry dates, with expansions to the south, east and west coming online by 2021, 2022 and 2023, respectively.

A long-overdue airport link would fix a conspicuous and puzzling oversight from 2001, when the original O-Train opened, ending at Greenboro instead of continuing to Macdonald-Cartier, as you might expect of a global capital.

Since then, the link has transformed repeatedly. Initial Phase 2 plans had us skipping the airport once again. An airport spur then debuted as a nice-to-have option.

Staff are now recommending — as long as other levels of government can be persuaded to pick up the spur's $155 million tab — a transit station inside the airport terminal, as opposed to the original location somewhere near the parking facilities (not a key destination for transit riders).

Passengers will still have to transfer at South Keys and again at Bayview Station to get downtown, but compared to our current transit offering, shivering at a bus stop outside the terminal while you wait for a 97, it's, well, transformative. But you can believe it when you ride it.

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Your essential daily news

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metro LIFE

Your essential daily news

Tuesday, February 21, 2017

14%

In 32 U.S. states that enacted same-sex marriage laws, suicide attempts dropped 7 per cent among all students and 14 per cent among gay kids after the laws were passed, a new study has found.

Life without an Instagram filter

HEALTH

More people opting to switch off from device-driven days for a digital detox

When songwriter Natasha Valencia lost her phone three times in one day — at a coffee shop, in her car, and under a pillow — she wasn't bothered.

In fact, she felt more "in control" that Sunday in December. When her boyfriend found her iPhone 5S and offered it back to her, she didn't want it.

"I felt a little freer to go about my day not attached to anything, not feeling like I needed a device to get through the day," she says.

So Valencia, 22, decided to make going phone-free a Sunday habit. Her accidental digital detox is now deliberate. Every Saturday night, instead of charging the phone at her bedside, she leaves it on silent mode in a drawer of her apothecary table until Monday morning.

"Out of sight out of mind," says the Torontonian. "I've noticed my thoughts are clearer on those days (without my phone)."

The products of the digital age — smartphones and laptops and tomorrow's innovations — are increasingly met with trepidation as the "dark side" to these devices, are exposed, says technology analyst Carmi Levy. The potential to be hacked, tracked, robbed, and overworked or to become an "addict" to our devices is a growing concern. The discourse has changed from one of innovation and awe to apprehension.

"We're increasingly looking for solutions that allow us to disconnect, and gracefully find some time to recharge our battery," says Levy.

"Digital detox" is now part of the lexicon as weekend getaways encourage "unplugging." Social networking sites rise and fall like the short-lived video-sharing Vine app, and other goliaths including Facebook are losing users, according to tech research groups. More people are downgrading to flip phones, those relics of the early decade, according to research firm IDC. Nokia is rumoured to be launching a throwback to the basic cellphone it first sold 17 years ago, according to VentureBeat.

"We're finally starting to wake up to the realities of what the always-on lifestyle is costing us," says Levy. We're overworked and over-connected. "Smartphones very quietly break down the barriers that once existed between our professional and personal lives."

That lifestyle began in January 2007 when Apple launched the iPhone. South of the border, it was called a revolution by founder Steve Jobs. "Every once in a while a revolutionary product comes along that changes everything," said Jobs.

Levy remembers the launch "like it was yesterday."

"I often call these moments inflection points, and Jobs' reveal certainly was one," he says. Smartphones started the "mobile revolution" changing how the world communicates.

A few months earlier, Mark Zuckerberg had opened Facebook. The iPhone would become the dwelling place of the social network with more than 147 million monthly active users by 2013.

Some who desire an escape from their digital life literally run for the hills. A Toronto "camp for adults" asks some 250 participants to "step away from their adult persona and find their inner kid," says Emma Brooks, one of eight co-founders of Camp Reset, an "adult summer camp and digital detox" offering its fourth four-day excursion this June at Camp Wahanowin in Orillia.

Camp Reset is four days of meditation, yoga and forest dance parties, devoid of real names, talk of work and devices. Camp Reset is four days of meditation, yoga and forest dance parties, devoid of real names, talk of work and devices, which are discarded in a ceremony at the start of the weekend. Campers take a no-phones pledge and press a giant wooden button with the word "RESET" on it.

A similar pledge was the task at hand for the mostly 19- and 20-year-old students in Trent Cruz's Social Media, Virtual gaming and Networked Life class at Western University. His students defined the terms of their own weeklong digital cleanse — some cut out certain apps, others put their phones aside entirely — and wrote journal entries about the experience.

"There's a lot of anxiety around social media, the use of it or abstaining from it," says Cruz. This is why it was so difficult for his students to abstain from sites and apps including Facebook and Snapchat. Among their biggest concerns were the fear of missing out, or FOMO, and what to do when they were alone.

Valencia learned to give herself "permission" to be alone during her Sunday detox as though the mobile revolution of the last decade forced a kind of obligatory connection. Now she's more aware of the time she spends on devices during weekdays and how it affects her anxiety levels and her music.

"Being alone is good," she says. "You just kind of sit."

Now when she's out shopping and waiting for a friend or writing at a coffee shop, she chooses to "look around at the world," instead of at a screen. Especially on Sundays. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Natasha Valencia, 22, is a Toronto songwriter who accidentally detoxed from her iPhone one Sunday and has made a point of doing a Sunday detox every week from her devices and social media. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

Crashing on the mattress of a really Lazyman Comedy

In Crashing, Pete Holmes crashes on the couches of better comedians who make guest appearances. CONTRIBUTED

THE SHOW: Crashing, Season 1, Episode 4 (HBO)
THE MOMENT: The drug deal

Pete (Pete Holmes), a meh comedian whose wife just left him, is passing out flyers for a comedy club when a rival comic steals his corner. Detouring down a side street, he interrupts two guys doing a weed deal.

"I'm so sorry, I'm not a narc," Pete sputters to the dealer. "Though I'm sure that's what narcs say. They're not going to say, 'I'm a narc.'" After another minute of this, Pete asks Dealer how to get his corner back.

"Set it off," Dealer says. "Be a man. Represent."

"Represent an attitude?" Pete asks, earnest but bemused.

"You gotta flip the switch," Dealer says. "You gotta light it up." "Sorry," Pete says, "but this sounds like lyrics from the album Willenium."

There's a potential comic riff in here somewhere, about how square white guys think black guys are automatically cooler. But Holmes, who also writes the show, and Judd Apatow, who directs and produces it, didn't bother to find it. Instead, they let things meander in the general direction of funny.

The series' conceit is that in every episode, Holmes crashes on the couches of better comedians who make guest appearances — an excuse for Apatow to hang out with his pals. So it has the vibe of improv, but without any shape or sharpness. It's Lazyman Comedy.

"I'm too soft to be in a fight," Pete says. "I'd be like a mattress going at it." It's a good description of the show. What I can't figure out is why we're supposed to care.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

Nursing plant babies in the jungalow

URBAN LIVING

No dimming grow lights as millennials pick pots over pets

Erin Kobayashi
Torstar News Service

My condo started transitioning into an urban jungle when I brought my outdoor plants inside for the winter. Despite my indoor plant collection doubling in size, I continued rescuing sad tropicals from the basements of retail stores. I stalked nurseries for chubby baby succulents to add to my thriving plant family.

But at 19 plants and counting, I wondered if I was referencing interior designer Justina Blakeney's maximalist "Jungalow" style or showing early signs of a serious hoarding problem.

Igor Josifovic and Judith de Graff, the founders of Urban Jungle Bloggers, recognize my plant addiction and actually celebrate the lifestyle on their blog and social media accounts every day.

"We believe that in today's fast-paced, digitalized world we need to reconnect with nature. Especially the urban dwellers," says Josifovic, "We want a connection to something so basic yet so essential, that will remind us of the 'natural pace of life' beyond smartphones and social media."

After years of running a successful plant blog, in January 2016 Josifovic and de Graff launched the Urban Jungle Bloggers Instagram account and were shocked by its rapid growth.

In just over a year, their Instagram had a whopping 270,000 followers, mostly women between the ages of 18 and 45. Josifovic suspects the enthusiasm for slow-growing, green spaces is a reaction to life in the fast-paced concrete jungle.

Lack of time and limited space can also explain millennials' growing interest in houseplants. This segment of the population is working longer hours and a higher proportion are living in condos that often regulate pet ownership, making plants a cheaper, easier alternative. Given the circumstances, a nursery for plants rather than for human or "fur" babies sounds perfectly logical.

"For me, they are definitely a sort of replacement as I can't have a pet but I still want something living and thriving in my home," says Josifovic, "By choosing the right plants, you can actually keep your lifestyle without being worried about your green roommates. Avid travellers will opt for low-maintenance plants that can survive without attention over weeks .... think of cacti, succulents, but also sturdy plants like snake plants etc."

Millennials surrounded by concrete are creating an urban jungle in their apartments, with many taking on 'plant babies' in lieu of furbabies and actual babies. CARLOS OSORIO/TORSTAR

Nurseries and garden centres have all seen a small but steady spike in millennial-aged gardeners purchasing houseplants.

Nelson French, an assistant manager at Plant World in Etobicoke echoes Josifovic.

> **I feel happiness. Gardening caters to my more nurturing side.**
> Sonia Kang, plant mom

"Plants are a great place to start if you're not sure you're ready to become a parent." He says, "Move from plants to pets and then, just maybe, to kids."

"Millennials know that plants can 'finish' an otherwise cold or sterile room with a hint of life — the perfect accent or feature room highlight — not realizing that almost all plants will have their dormant and/or ugly stages ... Just like kids they can fall victim to disease and pests that make them 'difficult' and sometimes far less pretty," French says.

But unlike children, you can slowly kill your once beloved plants and dispose of them without any consequences, or even shame.

Jewelry designer Sonia Kang, 29, reassured me that if my plants were healthy, I was not a hoarder but rather, a proud plant parent or crazy plant lady. She should know.

Kang lives in a 409-square-foot bachelor apartment in Toronto's west end with a dog, a guinea pig, and 140 plants, specializing in tropical foliage and citrus trees.

"I recently had to get curtains around my bed. I can't sleep at night because I have grow lights on. My citrus trees require eight to nine hours of light to fruit," she says.

But sacrificing sleep was worth the lemons, limes and calamondins Kang's trees have produced.

"I feel happiness," she says, citing a study by the University College London and Bristol University that naturally occurring soil bacteria has a proven mood-boosting, antidepressant effect. "Gardening caters to my more nurturing side."

HEALTH

Mom's opioids put young kids at risk

Young children whose mothers have been prescribed an opioid are at an increased risk of being hospitalized for an overdose from the potent pain medications, most often through accidental ingestion, a study has found.

"It wouldn't be at all surprising for a two- or three-year-old to find a tablet and put it in his or her mouth," said Dr. David Juurlink, a senior scientist at the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences who co-authored the study.

"And it's important to understand that a single tablet could kill a small child. These are very dangerous drugs at the high end of the dose range."

The study used 2002-2015 health records to identify 103 children aged 10 or younger who were treated in an Ontario hospital for an overdose and whose mothers had received publicly funded prescriptions for an opioid in the preceding year.

Each case was matched for risk comparison with a control group — children who had not suffered an opioid overdose and whose mothers had been prescribed an anti-inflammatory pain killer.

Young children whose mothers have been prescribed an opioid are at an increased risk of being hospitalized for an overdose from the potent pain medications, most often through accidental ingestion, a study has found. THE CANADIAN PRESS

The researchers found that kids whose moms were given an opioid had more than twice the risk of suffering an overdose compared to children whose mothers were put on anti-inflammatory pills. Codeine, oxycodone and methadone were the most common cause of the drug overdoses.

More than half the children treated for opioid toxicity were under two years old, including nine who were babies under a year old, say the researchers, whose study was published Monday in the journal Pediatrics.

"We don't know why the younger kids, under one, might have been exposed," said Juurlink, noting that children that age typically don't have the co-ordination or motor skills to independently access medications.

Thirty-nine of the children had to be admitted to hospital — 13 of them to critical care units. None of the 103 children included in the study died as a result of the overdose.

But that's not always the case, said Dr. Yaron Finkelstein, an emergency medicine specialist at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children, who co-authored the study.

Overall, more than 700 cases of opioid overdoses in young children were identified during the study period, but the researchers could only link 103 of them through the province's drug benefit plan to maternal prescriptions.

Some of these children in the larger group died, but Finkelstein declined to say how many for privacy reasons.

Children who suffer an opioid overdose typically exhibit a unique combination of symptoms, he said.

"Most of them are lethargic or have an altered level of consciousness, and they breathe very slowly and their heart rate and blood pressure go down many times, and there are other special signs like their pupils are pinpoints."

Injections of the drug naloxone can reverse the effects of the overdose, but some kids end up in the ICU on a ventilator to support their breathing until the opioid toxicity resolves.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Milo Yiannopoulos writes for the far-right publication Breitbart News. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

MEDIA

Yiannopoulos loses book, speaking gig

Right-wing provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos endured a Monday to forget after he was disinvited to this year's Conservative Political Action Conference and then had his controversial book deal cancelled by publishers Simon & Schuster.

The moves came after his attempt to clarify past comments on relationships between boys and older men fell flat with organizers.

The American Conservative Union hosts CPAC, which is being held Wednesday through Saturday outside Washington. ACU chairman Matt Schlapp said that "due to the revelation of an offensive video in the past 24 hours condoning pedophilia, the ACU has decided to rescind the invitation of Milo Yiannopoulos to speak."

After the polarizing Breitbart News editor was invited, his invitation sparked a backlash. The conservative Reagan Battalion blog tweeted video clips Sunday in which Yiannopoulos discussed Jews, sexual consent, statutory rape and child abuse.

Later Monday, the British author's upcoming book was axed.

"After careful consideration, Simon & Schuster and its Threshold Editions imprint have canceled publication of Dangerous by Milo Yiannopoulos," the publishers said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

How you can rack up a winning score

Using a secured credit card is the easiest way to establish a clear line-of-credit history that will count towards a positive credit score. ISTOCK

ADVICE

Your credit history will follow you for life; get it right

Gail Vaz-Oxlade
For Metro Canada

Want to have the ability to borrow money? You're going to have to establish a credit history. And it's not as hard as some people think.

1. Get a secured credit card
The fastest, cheapest and easiest way to establish a credit history is with a secured credit card. Since there's no risk to the lender because you've put up the cash to cover your balance, secured cards are great for new borrowers or people trying to re-establish credit after a bankruptcy.

Lenders usually want twice the credit card limit. So if you want a $500 credit limit, you'll have to ante up $1,000. Once you've established your ability to manage the card — anywhere from six months to a year — you can ask for the security requirement to be dropped and your deposit returned.

2. Get a gas or department store card
These cards are often easier to get and can be good ways to establish credit. The interest rates on these cards can be astronomical, but as long as pay your bill in full and on time it makes no difference what the interest rate is.

3. Borrow for an RRSP
While an RRSP is not officially used as collateral for the loan, lenders know where to find their money so approvals come more easily and the interest rate won't be horrendous.

Make sure you only borrow as much as you can afford to repay in six months. How much you borrow doesn't mean much; repaying the loan quickly without a misstep does.

Once the loan is repaid in full, use the amount you were using to repay the loan as your monthly retirement savings contribution.

Now you're building up your assets, which will be good for your credit history too.

4. Put up collateral
Collateral comes in all sorts of forms: from the car you're buying to those GICs you've got stashed away. If you have something a lender values, you're in the money.

For more money advice, visit Gail's website at gailvazoxlade.com

$ USE IT BETTER

Get smart with your credit
Of course, getting credit is only the first step to building a credit history. How you use it will be the test.

1. Pay all your bills on time. Yes, including your cellphone bill, since some cell providers report to the credit bureau.

2. Avoid applying for credit too often. Repeated requests for credit can be interpreted as a sign that you're in trouble, which will adversely affect your score.

3. Charge regularly and pay off in full. Responsible, ongoing use of credit will produce a good credit rating.

4. Don't over-expose yourself. Having multiple forms of credit with small balances can add up quickly and become unmanageable.

5. Don't use credit to pay off credit. Taking cash advances on one card to make payments on another means you're in over your head. Cut back on your spending, get back to the business of using credit to keep your record active and healthy, not to spend money you haven't yet earned.

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metro SPORTS

"I didn't play any defence": NBA All-Star MVP Anthony Davis who had a record 52-point game in the West's 192-182 win on Sunday in New Orleans

White House? No thanks

POLITICS

Athletes snubbing the president is nothing new

The routine is familiar. The president makes a few bad jokes. The championship-winning team presents the leader of the free world with a personalized jersey. Everyone smiles for the cameras.

Nothing political about that, right?

Not exactly.

In a divided nation, everything is political.

While presidents have been snubbed before, six players from the Super Bowl champion New England Patriots took it to another level by preemptively turning down an expected invitation from President Trump.

Rest assured, they won't be the last to mix sports and politics.

"The balance of power in professional sports now rests more with the performers than the owners," said Stephen Mosher, a professor of sports management and media at Ithaca College. "Without a labour force, (Patriots owner) Robert Kraft has nothing but an empty stadium. He has to let his employees make these political statements if he wants to win. He has to. There's too many different political views held by players in the National Football League.

"Actually," Mosher added, "I think it's quite refreshing."

The Patriots were part of the political discourse even before they dramatically rallied from 25 points down to beat the Atlanta Falcons in the first Super Bowl to go to overtime.

Kraft is a friend of the 45th president, and quarterback Tom Brady drew plenty of scrutiny when one of Trump's "Make America Great Again" caps was spotted in his locker at the start of the contentious presidential campaign.

Then, with the Patriots still in the midst of their Super Bowl celebration, tight end Martellus Bennett made it clear he had no intention of visiting Trump's White House.

Five teammates — defensive back Devin McCourty, running back LeGarrette Blount, defensive end Chris Long, linebacker Dont'a Hightower and defensive tackle Alan Branch — quickly followed suit. Most pinned their decision on political differences with the Republican administration.

Significant, to be sure.

But nothing new. Some two dozen athletes have turned down the opportunity since these visits started becoming a tradition under President Reagan.

That list includes Brady, who didn't attend a 2015 celebration because of what the quarterback insisted was a "family commitment" but others speculated was because of some unflattering comments a spokesman for President Obama made about the Deflategate scandal.

For some, a trip to the White House was no big deal.

Michael Jordan and Larry Bird fall under that category with the latter shrugging off an invitation from Reagan after the Boston Celtics won an NBA title, crabbily explaining, "If the president wants to see me, he knows where to find me."

Others cited political differences with those in power in declining.

Boston Bruins goaltender Tim Thomas declined to join the 2011 Stanley Cup champions on their White House visit, writing on social media that the government "has grown out of control, threatening the Rights, Liberties, and Property of the People."

Baltimore Ravens centre Matt Birk passed on a chance to meet with Obama because of the president's support of Planned Parenthood. Golfer Tom Lehman was even more outspoken when rebuffing a president, calling Bill Clinton "a draft-dodging baby killer."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The New England Patriots last visited the White House in April 2015 — sans Tom Brady.
WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES

> **They keep telling us over and over again that sports and politics don't mix. But that's simply not the case.** Stephen Mosher

MLB

Stroman intent on a better '17

Marcus Stroman wasn't as consistent as he wanted to be in his first full season in the major leagues last year.

So the Blue Jays right-hander streamlined his mechanics in an effort to turn things around.

"Mechanically I got a little out of whack at some point and I just simplified everything on my own," he said on Monday, speaking to reporters for the first time this spring. "That's something I'm going to do this year, kind of in my delivery and my motion, but I feel great.

"I'm excited for what I'm going to do."

Marcus Stroman
GETTY IMAGES

Stroman was part of a Toronto rotation that led the American League with a 3.64 earned-run average, a .236 batting average against, and a major-league best 995-1/3 innings pitched last season.

The 25-year-old accounted for 204 of those innings, making him the only Blue Jays starter to surpass 200 on the year. But while he showed durability, Stroman's numbers weren't so impressive: he finished with a 9-10 record and 4.37 ERA through 32 starts.

This year he wants to do better. He took that goal into his off-season training.

"I take unbelievable care of my body. I pride myself on that," Stroman said. "(I'm) five-foot-seven, but that's something that I'm very confident in is my body and what I'm able to do out there.

"I'm pretty sure I can go out there and throw 200, 220, 240 (innings), I feel like I can do that year-in, and year-out, that's the goal, as well as being dominating each and every outing."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **I think it might do him some good to go out there and compete in that WBC. That's right up his alley.**
> John Gibbons

NBA

Kings deal all-star Cousins to Pelicans

DeMarcus Cousins is on his way out of Sacramento — and right into an All-Star frontcourt pairing with Anthony Davis.

The New Orleans Pelicans acquired Cousins in a five-player, two-draft pick deal with the Kings late Sunday night, the same night the centre was playing in the All-Star Game in their arena.

The Kings dealt one of the most talented but temperamental big men in the game along with Omri Casspi to New Orleans for Tyreke Evans, 2016 first-round draft pick Buddy Hield, Langston Galloway and first- and second-round draft picks this summer.

DeMarcus Cousins
GETTY IMAGES

Cousins is averaging 27.8 points and 10.6 rebounds this season. He is to become a free agent in 2018. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Homan perfect through four matches at Scotties

Ontario's Rachel Homan and Manitoba's Michelle Englot stayed unbeaten and out front at the Canadian women's curling championship Monday in St. Catharines, Ont.

Homan downed Alberta's Shannon Kleibrink 6-4 after stealing single points in ends six to eight. She was joined at 4-0 by Englot, who was a 10-5 winner over Stacie Curtis of Newfoundland and Labrador. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL

Trouba suspended for illegal check

The NHL has suspended Winnipeg Jets defenceman Jacob Trouba for two games for an illegal check to the head of Ottawa Senators forward Mark Stone.

The incident occurred at 6:42 of the third period of Winnipeg's 3-2 win in Ottawa on Sunday. Stone had just made a pass in the Winnipeg zone when Trouba hit him with an open-ice elbow to the head.

Stone did not return to the game but has travelled with the Senators for their upcoming road trip. Trouba was assessed a minor penalty for illegal check to the head on the play.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jacob Trouba's hit on Mark Stone. THE CANADIAN PRESS

MAKE IT TONIGHT

Elegant Chicken Milanese

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

This dinner has two personalities: elegant, adult dinner or (cut in strips) high-end chicken fingers.

Ready in 30 minutes
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 15 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 1 pint of cherry tomatoes
- 1 garlic clove, sliced
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 Tbsp of balsamic vinegar
- Salt and pepper
- 2 chicken breasts
- 1 cup panko
- 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated
- 1 Tbsp lemon zest
- 2 eggs
- 1 or 2 Tbsp olive oil

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 F. Place tomatoes, garlic, olive oil, vinegar, salt and pepper on a baking sheet. Toss together then bake 20 minutes. Set aside.

2. With a sharp knife, slice chicken in half so you end up with four thin cutlets. Place each between two sheets of cling film and use a rolling pin to pound until cutlets are 1/4-inch thin.

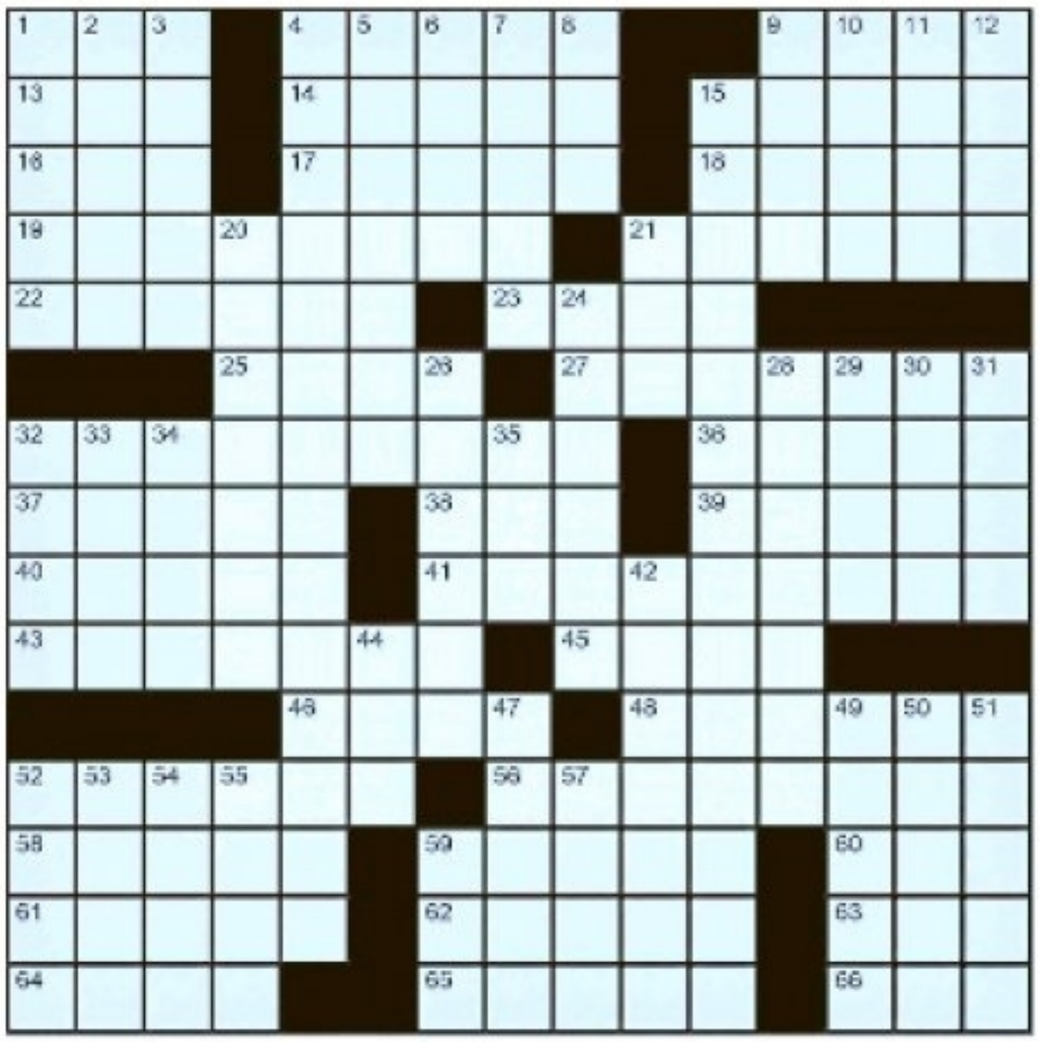
3. Whisk eggs in a shallow bowl. Mix panko, Parmesan, lemon zest and salt and pepper on a plate. Dip cutlets into egg, then press on each side in the panko mixture and place on a clean plate.

4. Pour olive oil in skillet over medium heat. Place chicken in hot oil and cook on each side till golden brown and crispy, about 5 minutes a side. Serve with fresh arugula and roasted cherry tomatoes.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Scammed
4. Blanketed, to a Bard
9. Boxer's pre-bout garb
13. U2 rock co-producer Brian
14. Actress Ms. Hayes (b.1900 - d.1993)
15. Two-footed
16. Bed-and-Breakfast
17. Towards the ship's left side
18. Overturn
19. Ready: 3 wds.
21. Hysteria
22. "Don't Forget the __" (Game show)
23. Think, archaically
25. "Dr. __"
27. Dutch scholar who wrote The Praise of Folly
32. Vintage house heaters
36. Like unfresh bread
37. Cheese-making process
38. Hair salon product
39. Raise with effort
40. So much, in music
41. Refined fellow
43. Forest of France
45. Golfing hazard
46. Non-verbally agrees
48. Join the army
52. Layout/structure
56. Propensity
58. Egg-shaped
59. __ Quebecois (Political group in Quebec)
60. Pinnacle
61. Like from-the-past fashions
62. Inert†gas
63. "The Golden Girls" name
64. Human 'cap' site
65. Unjustly treat
66. Alternatives

DOWN
1. Katherine of new CBS legal drama "Doubt"
2. Bother
3. Blood giver
4. "__ __ (When I'm Gone)" by Chilliwack
5. Store, as a library book
6. Bump on __
7. Ross who ran for President in the 1990s
8. Wile E. Coyote's blaster
9. Ready for the picking
10. Frank
11. Mercedes-__
12. Country star Mr. Arnold
15. Yukon community on Kluane Lake which is home to the Kluane First Nation: 2 wds.
20. Take, as from a savings account: 2 wds.
21. Pro
24. Begrudge
26. Wedged/stuck
28. Distinctive church feature
29. "Yes, __!"
30. Sea lettuce
31. Perceived
32. __-__-tat-tat
33. Culture†medium
34. Kitchen timer sound!
35. Deli bread
42. Canadian Forces Base community in Southern Ontario
44. __ much (Few)
47. Liverpool drumming legend Ringo
49. Something's start, shortly
50. Thoroughly search or examine
51. Writes using a computer keyboard
52. Spoon's pal
53. Vegetable-roasting place
54. Automatic
55. Morass
57. Consequently
59. Poodle's foot

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
This is a good day to lead others. You will be effective in dealing with friends, but you'll be especially effective with groups. Your enthusiasm will carry the day.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You impress bosses, VIPs and parents today with your enthusiasm and ability to express yourself in positive terms. It's easy for you to sell any idea that appeals to you.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
This is the perfect day to make big travel plans. This also is a good day to make plans for education, publishing, the media, medicine and the law. Your optimism shapes your thinking.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Discussions about inheritances and how to divide shared property will be successful today, because all parties will be fair and positive. Everyone will be pleased with results!

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Discussions with friends and partners will be upbeat and positive today. It's a great day to make plans for the future, especially about travel and dealing with foreign countries.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Work-related travel will appeal to you today. You also are enthusiastic about practical plans related to your job. (You're not afraid to tackle something big.)

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Creative projects, sports events and your work with children will get a lovely boost today, because you're thinking like a winner! Your optimism is the secret of your success.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Go forward with important family discussions today, especially if they relate to major repairs for the home. People are enthusiastic about what can be achieved.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Short trips will delight you today. This is a good day to study anything new or to impart information to others, because people are willing to entertain new ideas.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Business and commerce are favored today. Look for ways to boost your income or to get a better job. Work-related travel will appeal.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You're in a positive frame of mind today because you expect good things for yourself in the future. Because your expectations are positive, it's quite likely that good results will follow.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Research of any kind will go well today because you are in the right frame of mind. You instinctively will investigate areas that will yield the best results.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

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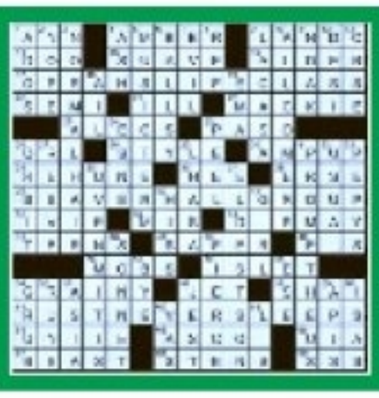

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